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For the Non-provisional Utility Patent Application
For the
Bingo Caddy

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IV. Specification

A. Preamble

1. Name of the applicant: Angelo Petralia
2. Title of the design: Bingo Caddy
3. Brief description of the nature and intended use of the BINGO CADDY: This invention relates to lightweight, affordable, portable devices for assisting in the playing of Bingo and in providing ergonomic surfaces for reading, writing, drawing, and other activities that require a slanted surface, secure interior storage wells, and exterior utility wells.

B. Cross-reference to related applications

Various U.S. patents have issued related to the use of devices for supporting Bingo cards/sheets:

1. U.S. Patent No. 3,773,154 (11/73) to Mitchell.
2. U.S. Patent No. 3,871,519 (03/75) to Groomes. This invention provided a case for carrying and storing Bingo equipment and consist of two circular portions hinged at the base.
3. U.S. Patent No. 3,921,983 (11/75) to Taylor.
4. U.S. Patent No. 4,500,091 (02/85) to Rovsek. This invention provides a Bingo game box with a cover and has flexible strips that overlay the game cards.
5. U.S. Patent No. 4,618,151 (10/86) to Fadner et al.
6. U.S. Patent No. 4,630,830 (12/86) to Gadd. This invention provides a Bingo card holder.
7. U.S. Patent No. 4,646,804 (03/87) to Damiano. This invention provides a handbag with pockets for carrying Bingo supplies.
8. U.S. Patent No. 4,761,008 (08/02/88) to Huggins. This invention provides a device for carrying and holding Bingo supplies and can be sealed with an attaching top to form a playing surface at an angle.

9. U.S. Patent No. 4,765,583 (08/88) to Tenner.
10. U.S. Patent No. 4,872,550 (10/89) to Stranges.
11. U.S. Patent No. 4,948,139 (08/14/90) to R. Heezel. This invention provided a case that expands to an enlarged playing area and has swinging doors to allow storage of markers.
12. U.S. Patent No. 5,028,048 (07/02/91) to Watson et al. This invention provided a game-carrying and playing device with a surface to support game cards and sides that position to offer an inclined playing surface.
13. U.S. Patent No. 5,054,783 (10/08/91) to Hull et al. This invention provides a device for storing and transporting Bingo supplies and a slanted fold-out playing surface that holds cards.
14. U.S. Patent No. 5,213,326 (05/25/93) to Rundell et al. This invention provides a Bingo sheet organizing device.

The present invention provides a lightweight, portable device that stores and transports supplies and personal items.

The present invention provides an ergonomic playing surface that rests atop existing table tops or other flat surfaces and allows users to organize, view, and mark their playing cards/sheets, books, keyboards, and calculators thus facilitating rapid play/use and promoting physical health.

This present invention reduces neck, back, arm, and hand strain.

This present invention provides convenient wells on the top of the playing surface to hold supplies and personal items during use.

The present invention is totally assembled and requires no additional assembly for use.

The present invention is lightweight for carrying, easy to use, simple to manufacture, and inexpensive.

The present invention can be used on trays attached to wheelchairs to provide an accessible playing surface.

C. Statement regarding federally sponsored research or development

This invention was not developed through any federally sponsored research and development, although federal installations could benefit from its use.

D. Background of the Invention

Gaming with Bingo is a growing industry both domestically and abroad. At one time, only Bingo parlors could be found on Native American reservations. Today almost one hundred casinos are operating in twenty-one states (Begun, Siegal, and Jacobs 29). There are five types of legal gambling in the United States: bingo, lotteries, pari-mutual betting, off track betting and casinos. Bingo is the most common form of legalized gambling; forty-seven states participate in legal Bingo (Bingo is not presently played in Hawaii, Tennessee, and Utah). In virtually every state, nonprofit Bingo is permitted.

According to the 2003 "Your Guide to: USA & CANADIAN Gambling Locations" Published by Aruba Directories Missoula Montana, there are more than 50 million bingo players worldwide. In the U. S. and Canada there are approximately 1080 bingo halls, for profit, that play at least four days a week. Most play at least six days a week, many of them seven days a week. In the U. S. there were 839 listed, while there are 241 in Canada. Many new facilities are not listed.

There are also about 6,000 locations listed that played bingo that were civic clubs, social clubs, churches, schools, etc. such as American Legion, VFW, Moose, Knights of Columbus, Elks, and Catholic Churches.

Bingo is a form of lottery descended from Lo Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia, the Italian National Lottery, which was organized in 1530. The modern version of Bingo was introduced to America in 1930 by New York toy and game manufacturer Edwin S. Lowe. Since then, the number of players has steadily increased.

Bingo is played with each person having one or more cards or sheets of numbers arranged in squares in columns and rows. Numbers are then selected and called out randomly and players “mark” the corresponding numbers on their cards or sheets until a defined design or sequence is achieved. The first player to achieve this sequence or design declares BINGO and wins whatever stakes are offered.

Because of the increasing popularity of this game, various improvements have occurred to decrease the time each game takes, to increase the comfort of the players, and improve access to the game. The games are faster-paced, players play more cards simultaneously, and there is an increase in the number of players. Accordingly, there exists a need to maximize the player’s ability to keep pace and to maintain manage many cards/sheets and related supplies and personal items, and increase the comfort and convenience of the player by improving ergonomics and providing a portable playing surface/storage unit.

In addition, the increased use of computers and calculators, along with the need for ergonomic surfaces for use by students and individuals with neck, back, and/or hand problems, including individuals with disabilities, is addressed by this caddy.

E. Brief Summary of the Invention

The present invention is a lightweight, portable, storage, organization, and functional device that creates an ergonomic surface suitable for reading, writing, and drawing and is especially suitable for the playing of Bingo. The device consists of a hinged top and bottom with an offset latch and handle.

In transporting and storing supplies and items, there are lock-in wells in the interior of the bottom section. In organizing and using the device, the top portion is sloped to facilitate viewing and marking the sheets/cards, is large enough to hold multiple cards, and has wells on the upper portion of the top sized to accommodate supplies, beverages and personal items during use. The bottom portion is equipped with a lip that fits over the edge of a table or other flat surface

and secures the device. The units can be manufactured to weigh less than 5 pounds and in colors.

The body of the device has a handle affixed to the exterior surface. The top and the bottom pieces interlock and are attached with a spring latch. The simple design eliminates the need for any assembly by the user and facilitates the manufacture and distribution of the product at a lower cost.

F. Description of the figure or figures of the drawing

The caddy consists of two molded pieces connected by a hinge 6 and secured with a springcatch latch 10 and 11 to make the device safe and easy to transport and simple to use. The molded one-piece top consists of one rectangular piece with a sloped flat surface portion 1, a rectangular flat utility portion 15 that is parallel to the table or other flat surface on which it is designed to be used, with six cylindrical wells of various diameters (3 typical, 4 typical, and 5) designed to hold daubers, beverages, tokens, and personal items as pictured in Figures 1 and 2; two irregular rectangular side portions 18 typical as pictured in Figure 2; a back rectangular portion 16 onto which the handle 12 is attached, and a small rectangular front portion 15 to hold paper or other items in place with an offset half of the lip 13 to secure the caddy to a flat surface with the female part of a locking device 11 and a raised lip 17 to secure papers, books, or other items in place on the flat surface as pictured in Figure 3. The underneath portion of the top is equipped with a rectangular security bar 14 affixed perpendicular to the top and designed to fit into the tabs 9 typical in the bottom portion to secure the stored daubers and personal items during transport.

The molded one-piece bottom consists of one rectangular piece with a flat surface 2 containing twelve vertical cylindrical spikes 7 typical placed in pairs in varying distances from the center to hold daubers and other items in place with six anchoring wells separated by rectangular tabs 8 and 9 typical to fit securely against security bar 14; the male portion of the locking device 10 and the offset lip 12 as pictured in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

This caddy is designed to be manufactured using high impact colored plastic through injection molding. This process improves the quality of durability for high use, color for utility and appearance, lighter weight for portability and lower shipping costs, and lower production costs. The two-piece design of the caddy requires two molds to be manufactured. The hinge, the lock, and the handle are affixed during assembly. This caddy differs from other similar devices in that it requires no assembly on the part of the user, is lightweight for ease of use, provides for secure storage of devices and personal items, and provides an ergonomic surface for use in Bingo, reading, writing, and keyboarding/calculating.

G. Brief Description of the Several Views of the Invention

Figure 1 is a top plane view of the top section of the Bingo Caddy.

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the top section of the Bingo Caddy.

Figure 3 is a front view of the top section of the Bingo Caddy.

Figure 4 is a top plane view of the bottom section of the Bingo Caddy.

Figure 5 is a side view of the bottom section of the Bingo Caddy.

Figure 6 is a complete view of the Bingo Caddy with a illustrative dauber.

H. Abstract of the Disclosure

The Bingo Caddy is a lightweight, portable, storage, organization, and functional device that creates an ergonomic surface suitable for reading, writing, and drawing and is especially suitable for the playing of Bingo. The device consists of a hinged top and bottom with an offset latch and handle.

In transporting and storing supplies and items, there are lock-in wells in the interior of the bottom section. In organizing and using the device, the top portion is sloped to facilitate viewing and marking the sheets/cards, is large enough to hold multiple cards, and has wells on the upper portion of the top sized to accommodate supplies, beverages and personal items during use. The bottom portion is equipped with a lip that fits over the edge of a table or other flat surface